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Prologue

Cloverpetal scuffled through the bushes until she got into the clearing. She was far behind her journeying Clanmates as they headed to Fourtrees. She winced at sudden pain, but kept going. *He has to know...* she winced again and rushed over to a blue-gray WindClan tom. She stopped and panted.

"Cloverpetal?" the tom mewed, nudging her. "There you are! I've been looking for y-"
"I need to tell you something," Cloverpetal interrupted. Her paws shuffled as the tom nodded gently. He put his paw under her chin. "Let's sneak away so no one notices. Come on!"

He rushed away, as Cloverpetal ran after. "Wait, Spottedripple!" she shouted. "What I need to tell you is the reason I'm so slow!"

Spottedripple stopped and turned to Cloverpetal. "You can't always be slow. We're both deputies, so we're one of the most targetted cats." Cloverpetal understood that. *Just listen to me,* she begged in her head.
Spottedripple made a concerned glance at the group of cats. "Alright, what's so important that you had to almost get us caught?" he hissed playfully. Cloverpetal understood that he was joking around, but it just wasn't the time. She sighed and breathed in before speaking. "I... am carrying your kits."

"Again?" he mewed. "This is out third litter!"

Cloverpetal paused. It was? Oh StarClan! She never noticed that she had so much memories with Spottedripple, so much fun, that she was having a third litter! But she knew it would be okay.

"It's okay," Spottedripple mewed. He rested his head under the she-

cat's chin. "They'll be great, just like the others."

Cloverpetal purred, as she thought of how perfect her kits were. Especially Rowanpaw, who would earn their warrior name soon, alongside Branchpaw.

"We should head back." Spottedripple mewed. "See you again."

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Amberpaw rushed into the medicine den. "The kits are okay!" she purred gladly.

She saw her mentor turn to her, his yellow eyes glimmering at her. "That's great. What are their names?"

Amberpaw smiled. "Slatekit, Ivykit and Tawnykit."

"You must be proud," Adderspirit mewed. He turned to his herb stock and scuffled through. "They are your siblings after all." A frown then appeared on his face. "We still don't know the father."

"Cloverstar became leader," Amberpaw worriedly reminded him, "but we have no queens. Who will nurse them?"

Adderspirit chuckled. "We discussed that. She said she will both nurse her kits until they come of age to eat prey, and will fulfill her duties as leader."

Amberpaw blinked. "That will be too stressful! We should borrow a different Clan queen... perhaps Twigwing?"

Adderspirit shook his head. "WindClan may be our ally at this time, but that doesn't mean they will help us with nursing our kits." He then walked out of his den, heading to Spottedstar with a leaf in his mouth. Amberpaw slowly followed.

"Amberpaw, get this leaf and fetch some water."

Amberpaw nodded and rushed out of camp. She froze and looked up, starting to shake. Four stars glimmered at her. One sparkling a cream color, one shining a blue color, one glittering a brown color, and the last glistening gray. She almost dropped her leaf.

She snapped back to focus and filled the leaf.

Running back to camp, she thought about the prophecy she had just received. She came to Adderspirit and Cloverstar. "Adderspirit, come now." She handed Cloverstar the water an

Adderspirit blinked. "Er, okay."

Amberpaw lead him to the medicine den. "I received a prophecy..."

Adderspirit gasped in shock and wrapped his tail around his paws as the moon casted on the den, like lights in the night sky.

Chapter 1

"There will be four cats; one who casts shadows, one who strikes like thunder, one who feels the wind in their whiskers, and one who is as powerful as the tides in the river."

That was the prophecy StarClan had sent Amberpaw a few moons ago, Cloverstar thought, shuffling her paws. It had to be a cat from each Clan. The cat who casted shadows was in ShadowClan, surely. Only she, Amberpaw and Adderspirit knew about this prophecy.

Memories came into Cloverstar's head. Could Spottedstar be the cat who could feel the wind in their whiskers? She then looked down at her kits. Could one of them be the cat who casts shadows? Would it be Tawnykit?

Tawnykit rolled a moss ball over to Ivykit, who peeped as the ball rolled over to them. They sounded just like a chick waiting for it's prey. Surely not Tawnykit or Ivykit.

Cloverstar shuddered when she looked at Slatekit, who was sitting in the corner of the nursery, growling. It had to be him. He would cast a shadow over his Clan! Wouldn't he?

Cloverstar looked up at Silverpelt. "Please, StarClan," she prayed, "let me know who the cat who would cast shadows is. I need to know... I need to."

"You will know soon enough." came a voice. Cloverstar jumped and spun around, seeing Adderspirit lightly walk over to her. "I'm sure none of your kits are like, evil or insane. Say, I think Slatekit is just lonely. How about you go join him? Maybe let him join them?"

"What if he doesn't want to? What if they don't allow him?"

"Then either scold them, or play with them yourself." he mewed simply, turning around as he flicked his tail.

Cloverstar turned back and slipped past Tawnykit and Ivykit, over to Slatekit. "Hey," she mewed gently, "why don't you go join them?"

"But I don't *like* moss-ball," Slatekit grumbled. "I only like you!"

Cloverstar let out a purr of laughter. "Oh, silly you. I love you too, but if you want to be a warrior, then you got to make friends. Someday, if you do that, you might even become a leader!"

"No, I'll just be a warrior at the bottom of the Clan," Slatekit mumbled.

"Don't discourage yourself!" Cloverstar hissed gently. "You'll be a great warrior."

She felt bad, as her kit seemed to tear up from the scold. "Hey, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. I'm sorry."

"I know, but... it's just, I don't want to leave you!" Slatekit wailed.

Slatekit perked his tiny ears, and so did Cloverstar. They had both heard small footsteps rush over. Cloverstar purred as she saw Tawnykit and Ivykit huddle next to their brother, purring.

Slatekit blinked out tears, and slowly a smile creeped onto his face. His frown had disappeared as Tawnykit wiped away a tear.

Slatekit is innocent. I know it.

"Is everything alright?" came a mew. "I heard some crying."

Cloverstar looked to see a small, light golden elder. "Minnowtalon!"

Slatekit looked at the huge scar on the side of Minnowtalon and rushed over. "How'd you get that scar?" His voice seemed to change from sadness and pain to delight and curiosity.

Minnowtalon chuckled and sat down. "There was a fire when I was an apprentice named Minnowpaw," she mewed.

"Oh, the fire!" Cloverstar mewed. "I remember that!"

"Mhm, you were the newest kit at the time. Your mother was petrified." Minnowtalon purred. "She was always a worried wuss."

"Well, I mean, I think you would be that worried if Troutfur had been the youngest cat in the Clan and was in that fire." Cloverstar responded. She heard Minnowtalon chuckle again. "Good point."

"Anyways...?" mewed Tawnykit.

"What happened after that?" meowed Ivykit.

"Cloverstar, who was Cloverkit at the time, was stuck in a circle of fire. I wanted to earn my warrior name quite badly, so I leapt in and saved Cloverstar. On the way out, I received a burn scar. Thank StarClan Adderspirit was there."

"Wait, Adderspirit?" asked Cloverstar. "Where was Silverpounce?"

"Adderspirit had told me that Silverpounce had died in the fire," Minnowtalon mewed.

"Scary," said Slatekit, now shivering in fear.

"Not to worry. It happens to every cat." Minnowtalon responded. "Anyways, sundown is coming along. You kits should get some sleep."

"Can we go eat first?" pleaded Ivykit.

"Please?" begged Tawnykit.

"I guess you all are pretty hungry. Let me get you a mouse to eat." Cloverstar mewed, standing and walking to the fresh-kill pile. She grabbed the smallest mouse and headed back.

"Thank you, Cloverstar!" mewed Slatekit. Cloverstar headed to her

nest, and drifted off to sleep. As sleep took her, she watched her sleepy kin - Rowanbranch, Branchnut, Quietpaw, Littlepaw, Stonepaw and Grasspaw - all head to their dens to rest. But a question filled her mind before she shut her eyes: where was Amberpaw?

Chapter 2

Amberpaw and Adderspirit headed to Highstones, followed by the other medicine cats and their apprentices: Starlingtalon of WindClan, Swiftbrook of ThunderClan, and Lizardpaw and Weaselhollow of RiverClan.

"So, Amberpaw." Lizardpaw mewed as the group paused to wait for a passing monster. "You seem panicked. Are you alright?"

"O-Oh, yeah! I-I'm fine!" Amberpaw chuckled. "It's just that I think Cloverstar might be unaware that it's half moon." She raced across the Thunderpath when the monster had passed.

Lizardpaw dashed after her, and Amberpaw could hear him panting. "Why didn't you tell her?" he yelled, trying to sound clear from another monster passing behind them. "What if they will prepare for a battle?"

"I'm sure they won't do that without their medicine cats," Amberpaw teased, cuffing Lizardpaw's ear playfully. "Come on! We're caught behind!"

Lizardpaw and Amberpaw raced after the group, who were entering Mothermouth. "Have you received the prophecy?" Lizardpaw blurted out.

Amberpaw blinked. "The prophecy? About the four stars?"

Lizardpaw nodded. "Mhm." He paused to give himself a wash. Amberpaw could tell he was listening. "Yeah, I have. I was just fetching water for Cloverstar after she kitted..."

Lizardpaw paused his licking and looked up, sticking his tongue back into his mouth. "Cloverstar has kits? Isn't that against the code?"

"Not really. I mean, unless she was mates with a different Clan cat

or an outsider, but that can't be true, right? She's my mother, after all." Amberpaw looked out at the corner of her eye to see Starlingtalon's fur spike up at what she said, but she ignored it. Cloverstar couldn't have broken the code now, should she? No way! It was impossible. Cloverstar had served her Clan for many moons now. No way she would do such a thing!

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Amberpaw blinked open her eyes. A bright forest glittered around her, the stars sparkling like fireflies. She rose onto her paws and looked around, seeing the other medicine cats. Her eyes locked on Lizardpaw before she heard a call.

Amberpaw, it whispered.

Amberpaw's fur rose like thistles and she looked around. The medicine cats were gone from her sight. She looked at the ground. She was in her territory. Was she put back in ShadowClan? But it was sunhigh. She saw Starlingtalon panicking as he shouted.

"Spottedstar is missing!"

Amberpaw raced out of camp. She had a strange feeling. She ran over to the side of the Thunderpath, where Cloverstar was.

"Cloverstar?"

The leader didn't seem to notice the medicine cat apprentice. Amberpaw tilted her head to one side. She pressed her paw to Cloverstar's side, but it went through. She started to panic. Had Cloverstar died while she was gone? But then she saw Spottedstar on top of Highstones, as he had swiftly leapt down, stone by stone, until he came face to face with Cloverstar.

Amberpaw's pupils went to slits as she saw them purring; Spottedstar nuzzling Cloverstar's cheek. She spun around to see a cat, very familiar. They almost looked like her...

She then realized. This *was* her. It was her future self.

Cloverstar turned around. "Amberwillow!" she shrieked. "What are you doing here?"

"I-Is..." Amberwillow began. "Is Spottedstar my father?"

"N-No!" Spottedstar mewed quickly, his pelt slowly raising. Amberpaw huddled next to her future self. She then saw Spottedstar run off, panting at the side of the Thunderpath. Cloverstar raced after, not realizing the monster right next to her.

"Cloverstar, no!" Amberwillow screamed.

Before Amberpaw had heard a thump, she saw Spottedstar jump in front of Cloverstar and quickly threw her to the side. Yellow light blinded Amberpaw before she woke up, panicking. She started to shake, before she felt the gentle touch of a spirit.

"Let it happen, Amberwillow."

The spirit faded as another paw touched her shoulder. She leapt to her paws and backed away into a wall before noticing it was only Lizardpaw.

"Are you okay?"

Amberpaw felt a purr toss out of her throat. Lizardpaw was so caring. But the main thing that had stolen her mind was anxiety. She rushed over to Lizardpaw and wrapped her neck around his, sobbing. "Spottedstar is going to die! It's all going to be my fault!"

She felt breath in her ear as Lizardpaw whispered. "If Spottedstar will die, at least I have you." Amberpaw blinked, looking around fluently. "No one is here." Lizardpaw stepped away. "I love you, Amberpaw."

Amberpaw smiled at Lizardpaw, and felt five words tumble out of her maw.

"I love you too, Lizardpaw."

Chapter 3

Spottedstar flicked his tail to one side. "Timberfeather, how about you send a hunting patrol?" he mewed. "We're running out of prey to eat, and it's the start of leaf-fall, so I recommend getting as much prey as possible.

He saw the she-cat nod to him before racing off, collecting Shadowwhisker and Aspenwish. He flicked his tail and strolled over to Twigwing. "How are the kits?"

The cream she-cat purred. "Excellent."

"Excellent?" he mewed. "So that means they're born, right?"

The she-cat revealed two tiny kits squealing when she moved her tail away. "Mhm."

Her eyes glistened. Spottedstar took a step back, grunting uncomfortably, before continuing. "You named them, haven't you?"

"Actually, I want you to name them." she meowed. Spottedstar was shocked by the fact she wanted that. They had only been together for a moon! And Spottedstar secretly did not even love her.

"Er, alright." He pointed a hooked claw at the blue-gray she-cat. "I'll name that one Petalkit, and her brother will be Shadowkit."

The cream tom kit squeaked at his father. Their eyes were already open; Shadowkit's eyes being green like his father's, and Petalkit's eyes being a pale yellow like her mother's.

"Great. They will be good warriors." He turned away, looking out the corner of his eye to see Twigwing starting to frown and unsheathe her claws, growling.

"You don't truly love the kits, do you?" he heard her say. He tried to ignore, but he heard quick footsteps, and next thing he knew, she as in front of him, hissing. "You're in love with another cat, aren't

you?"

"Yes, yes. That is true." he admitted. "I never loved you nor the kits." Twigwing grabbed him by the scruff and yanked him out of camp. "You're a useless father, you know that?" She started laughing. "Heh, I don't think you would even *want* to be my mate, now, would you?"

Spottedstar was breathless. "I..."

"You're a codebreaker!" hissed Twigwing. "I gave you a chance to love a Clanmate. The truth is, I know who is your mate. And now it is time that the Clan shall know, and they shall hate you forever!"

Spottedstar broke into tears. "Fine! Tell them I'm leaving. I won't ever come back."

Twigwing made a wicked grin. "Gladly."

Spottedstar raced away, across the Thunderpath, and onto Highstones. Hope faded from his eyes as he rested on a stone, before realizing.

He had to back down from his nine lives. Leaping down carefully, stone to stone, he prodded into Mothermouth, touched his nose to the Moonstone, and closed his eyes, grunting in great sorrow.

Chapter 4

Mudstar watched Swiftbrook pad into camp as the scarlet sun rose. "Did it go well?"

Swiftbrook nodded. "Yes indeed. The Clans knew about the prophecy. Even the medicine cat apprentices, surpsingly."

Mudstar blinked. "That's odd. Maybe their mentors told them?" He saw his white medicine cat shrug. "No, I disagree. They seemed deeply... calm and wise about it - at least, Lizardpaw did."

What about the other? Mudstar thought in his head.

She seemed to read Mudstar's mind. "The other one seemed to be afraid, despite being experienced with her medicine cat apprentice role."

Mudstar looked down from Highrock, watching his Clan slowly pad out from the shadows of their dens. "Do you ever wonder who the four cats are? There was a blue star, a gray star, a brown star and a cream star."

"I think of it every day!" Swiftbrook exclaimed. "The only cream cats I know are of ShadowClan. Is it possible that it could be one of them?"

"Yeah, but what if it's a rogue?" Mudstar murmured.

Swiftbrook shrugged. "StarClan would've *warned* us, not given us a prophecy; it would be a sign instead, wouldn't it?"

Mudstar nodded. "You have a good point. Who's the cat that has a strike like thunder? It's obviously a warrior in ThunderClan. The other mentions were the cat who casts shadows, the cat-"

"I know, I know! I was the one who discovered the prophecy, not you!" Swiftbrook scolded. Mudstar sighed and shuffled his paws.

"Maybe it isn't a warrior." Swiftbrook added on more calmly. "Maybe it's a deputy, or maybe it's even you!"

Mudstar was surprised. "Me? No way! I'm just an old, worthless leader who gives out commands!" he joked.

"You fought for your Clan for many moons, silly! And I'm sure your dying breath would be wasted from a fight." She froze, pausing. "At least, fighting for your Clan, of course!"

Mudstar quivered his whiskers. "I know what you mean, Swiftbrook, don't worry." He looked up at the moon. Anxiety pricked through his fur, but Swiftbrook licked his cheek soothingly, calming him down. She swiftly leapt off of the rock, but Mudstar hadn't noticed.

StarClan, whatever you have to offer me and ThunderClan, please let me die loyally. And please, do not kill off my Clan. I will fight you *myself if I have to, for the sake of my dear Clanmates.*